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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fifty-fifth session
Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2018

Draft report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

1. In accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 72/77, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-fifth session, reconvened its Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

2. The Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities held meetings from 29 January to 9 February 2018, with Peter Martinez (South Africa), as Chair.

3. In accordance with the workplan extended by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its fifty-ninth session (A/71/20, para. 137), the Working Group had before it the following:

(a) Note by the Secretariat entitled "Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities" (A/AC.105/C.1/L.362/Rev.1);

(b) Working paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Outline for the report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities" (A/AC.105/C.1/L.357);

(c) A conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities: preambular text and nine guidelines" (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.18);

(d) A conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities: guidelines still under discussion" (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.19);

(e) A conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities: preambular text and nine guidelines" (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.18/Rev.1);

(f) A non-paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Possible General Assembly resolution on guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities".

4. The Working Group recalled that its fifth intersessional meeting had been held in Vienna from 2 to 6 October 2017 and noted that it had been a constructive meeting.

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5. The Working Group noted that, in addition to the meetings that the Working Group had held during the present session of the Subcommittee with the benefit of interpretation services, the Chair and interested delegations had also held extensive informal consultations on the margins of the session, discussing preambular text, guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and the final report of the Working Group.

6. The Working Group agreed that the conference room paper referred to in paragraph 3 (e) above reflected progress made by the Working Group at the present session of the Subcommittee, and confirmed that consensus had been reached on the preamble and on the text of the following guidelines:

(a) Guideline 6: Enhance the practice of registering space objects;

(b) Guideline 11: Provide updated contact information and share information on space objects and orbital events;

(c) Guideline 14: Perform conjunction assessment during all orbital phases of controlled flight;

(d) Guideline 15: Develop practical approaches for pre-launch conjunction assessment;

(e) Guideline 23: Promote and facilitate international cooperation in support of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;

(f) Guideline 24: Share experience related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and develop new procedures, as appropriate, for information exchange;

(g) Guideline 30: Design and operation of space objects regardless of their physical and operational characteristics;

(h) Guideline 31: Take measures to address risks associated with the uncontrolled re-entry of space objects;

(i) Guideline 32: Observe measures of precaution when using sources of laser beams passing through outer space.

7. The Working Group noted that the conference room papers referred to in paragraph 3, subparagraphs (d) and (e), above would be translated into all the official languages of the United Nations following the present session of the Subcommittee.

8. The Working Group noted that considerations should continue on the guidelines contained in the conference room paper referred to in paragraph 3 (d) above, but that the Working Group was unable to agree at the present session on a dedicated consultative mechanism to address the guidelines on which consensus had not yet been reached.

9. The Working Group noted that it was unable to agree at the present session of the Subcommittee on the content of its final report.

10. The Working Group agreed that the Chair of the Working Group would consult with the Chair of the Committee and with the Secretariat regarding the scheduling of the sixty-first session of the Committee so as to give the Working Group the opportunity to meet during that session, following the UNISPACE+50 high-level segment, to benefit from interpretation services.

11. On 9 February 2018, the Working Group considered and adopted the present report.